

### **PARKS AND RECREATION CITIZENS SURVEY**

#### **Overview of the Methodology**

The City of Alexandria conducted a community attitude and interest survey during March and April of 2002 to help determine citizen usage, satisfaction, needs, and priorities for the parks and recreation system. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Alexandria.

Leisure Vision/ETC Institute worked extensively with City of Alexandria officials and Leon Younger and Pros in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

The goal was to obtain at least 600 completed surveys. This goal was more than accomplished, with 731 surveys being completed, including at least 200 completed surveys from each of the three Parks and Recreation Planning Districts. The results of the random sample of 731 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least  $\pm 3.6\%$ .

The following pages summarize major survey findings:

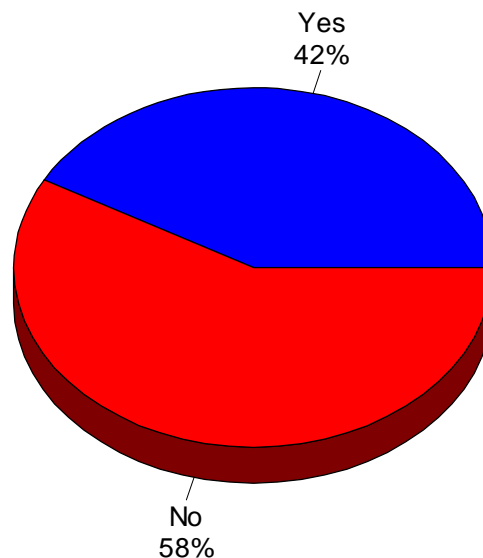
### Participation in Recreation Programs or Special Events

Respondents were asked if they or members of their household had participated in any recreation programs or special events offered by the City's Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department during the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

**Forty-two percent (42%) of respondent households indicated they had participated in recreation programs offered by the City of Alexandria during the past 12 months, and the other 58% had not participated.**

#### Q3. Have Respondent Households Participated in any Recreation Programs or Special Events Offered by the City of Alexandria During the Past 12 Months

by percentage of respondents

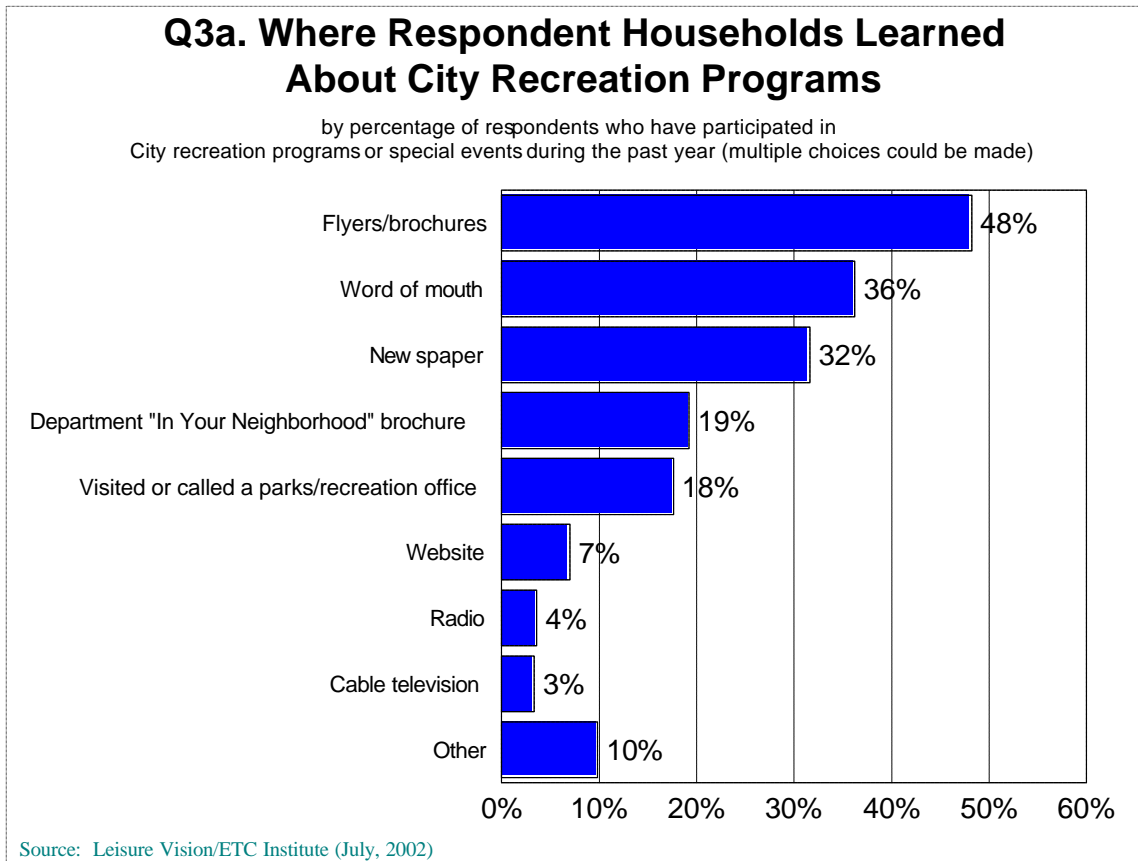


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

### How Citizens Learned About Parks and Recreation Programs

Household respondents who had participated in City of Alexandria recreation programs during the past 12 months were asked where they learned about the City's parks and recreation programs. The following summarizes key findings:

**Flyers/brochures (48%) was the most frequent way that respondents learned about the City's parks and recreation programs.** Other frequently mentioned methods of learning about parks and programs included word of mouth (36%) and newspaper (32%).



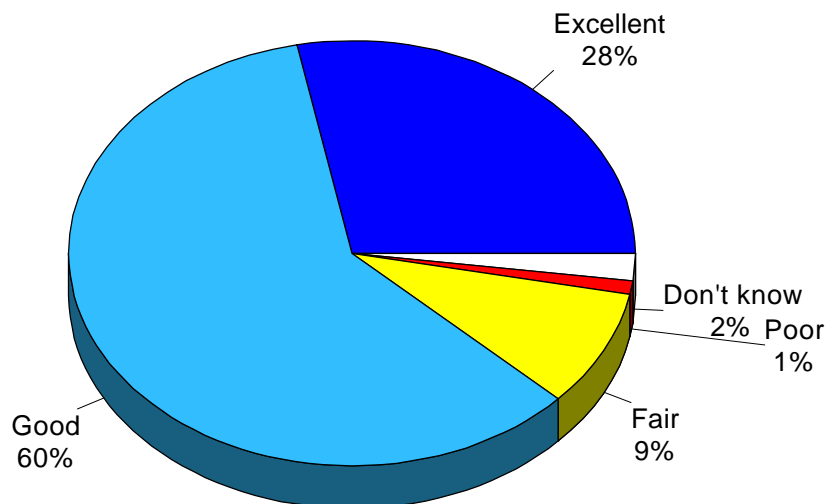
### ***Quality of Recreational Programs***

Household respondents who had participated in City of Alexandria recreation programs during the past 12 months were asked how they would rate the quality of the City programs they had participated in. The following summarizes key findings:

**Nearly 90% of respondents rated the programs as either excellent (28%) or good (60%).** An additional 9% of respondents rated the programs as fair, and just 1% rated them as poor. The remaining 2% indicated “don’t know”.

#### **Q3b. How Respondent Households Rate the Quality of the City Recreation Programs they Have Participated in**

by percentage of respondents who have participated in  
City recreation programs or special events during the past year



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

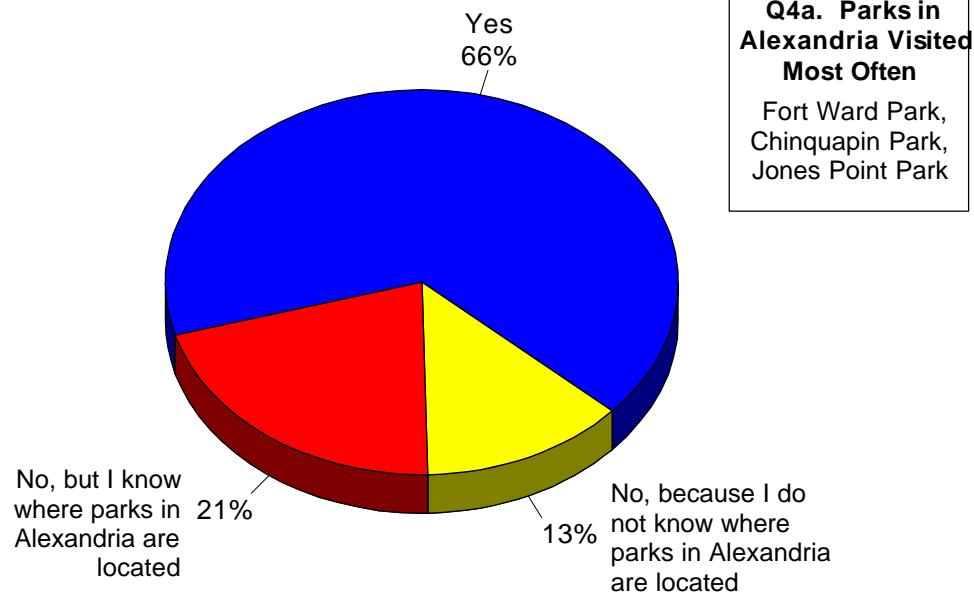
## Visitation of City Operated Parks

Respondents were asked if they or members of their household had visited any City operated parks in the City of Alexandria during the past year. The following summarizes key findings:

**Two-thirds (66%) of respondent households indicated they had visited a City operated park in the City of Alexandria during the past year.** In addition, 21% indicated they have not visited a City operated park in the City of Alexandria during the past year, but they do know where parks are located in the City of Alexandria. Thirteen percent (13%) indicated they have not visited a City operate park and they do not know where any parks in the City of Alexandria are located.

### Q4. Have Respondent Households Visited Any City Operated Parks in the City of Alexandria During the Past Year

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

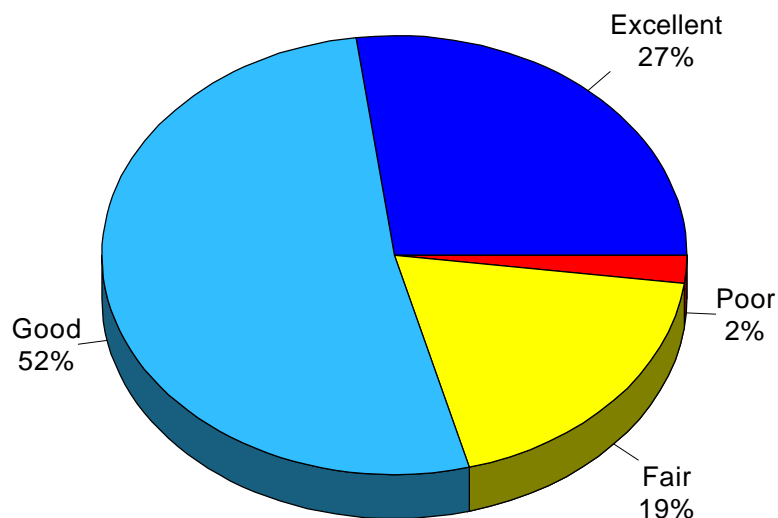
### ***Overall Physical Condition of Parks***

Households respondents who had visited a City operated park in the City of Alexandria during the past year were asked how they would rate the physical condition of all the City operated parks they had visited in the City of Alexandria. The following summarizes key findings:

**Over three-fourths (79%) of respondents rated the physical condition of City operated parks they had visited in the City of Alexandria as either excellent (27%) or good (52%).** An additional 19% of respondents rated the parks as fair, and just 2% rated them as poor.

#### **Q4b. How Respondent Households Rate the Physical Condition of ALL the City Operated Parks they Have Visited in the City of Alexandria**

by percentage of respondents who have visited City operated parks during the past year



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

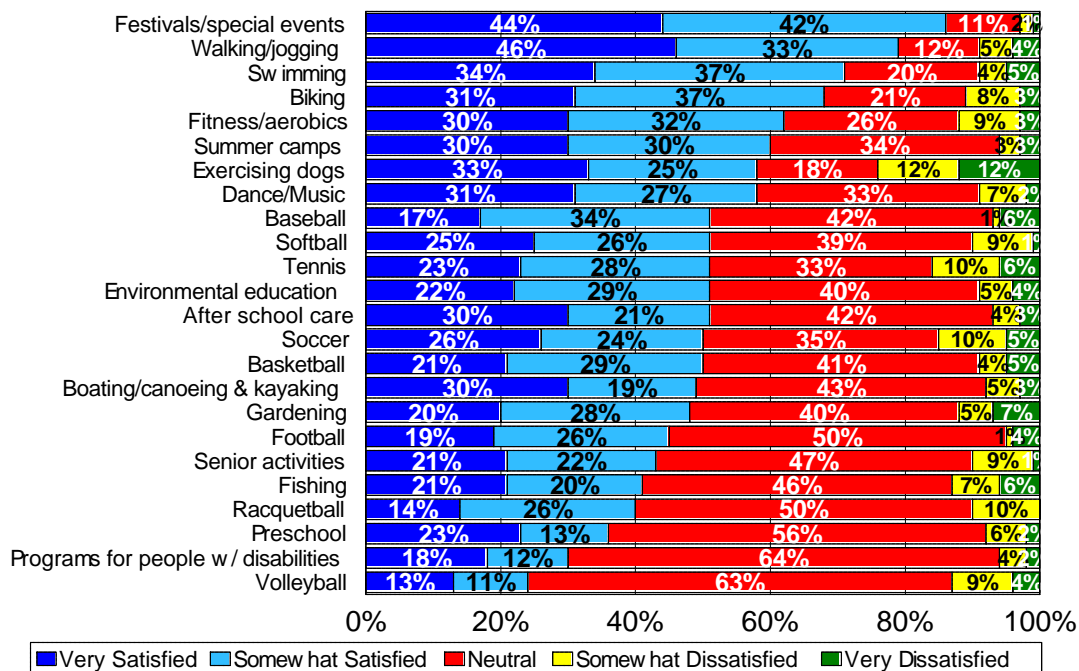
## Satisfaction with Various Recreational Programs

Based on a list of 24 various recreational programs offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each one. The following summarizes key findings:

**Festivals/special events is the program that had the highest percentage of respondents indicate being either very satisfied (44%) or somewhat satisfied (42%) with it.** There are three other programs that over two-thirds of respondents were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with. They are: walking/jogging (79%); swimming (71%); and biking (68%).

### Q5. Overall Satisfaction with Various Recreational Programs Offered by the City of Alexandria

by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't knows")

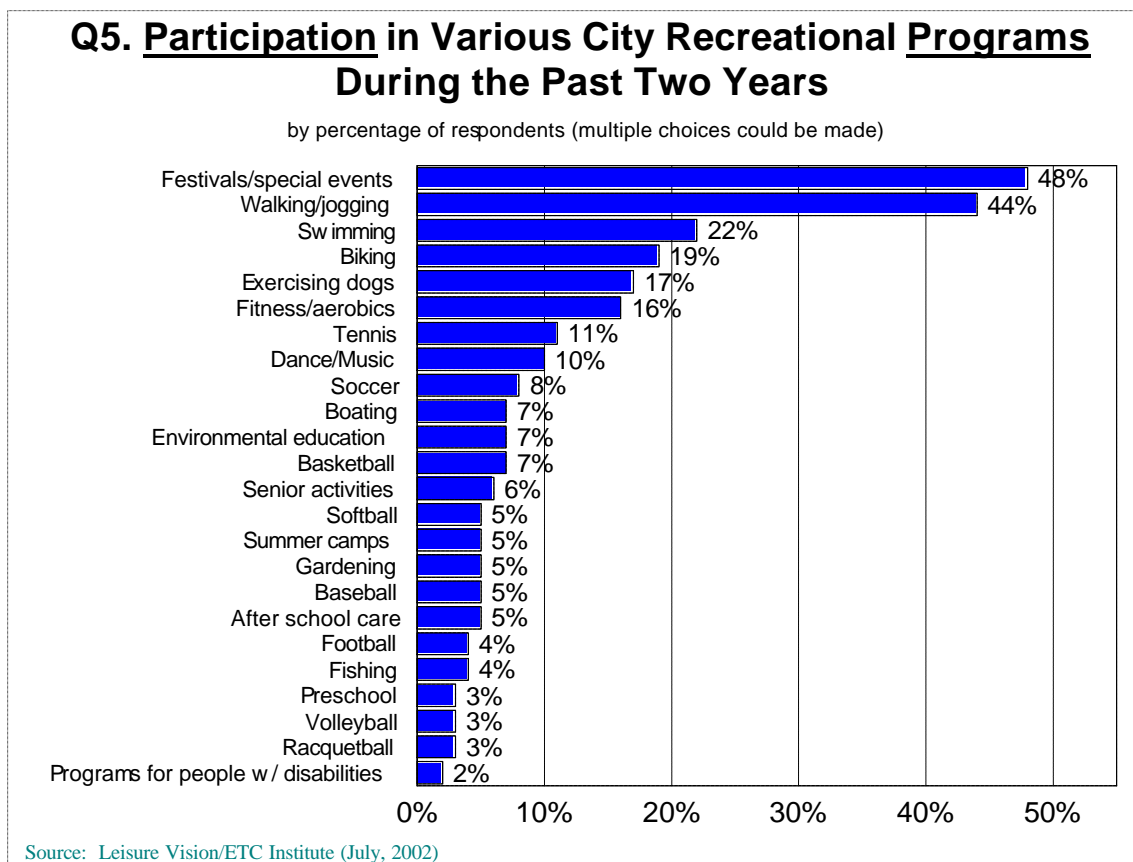


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

## Participation in Various Recreational Programs

From the list of 24 various recreational programs offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, respondents were asked to indicate which ones they or members of their household had participated in during the past two years. The following summarizes key findings:

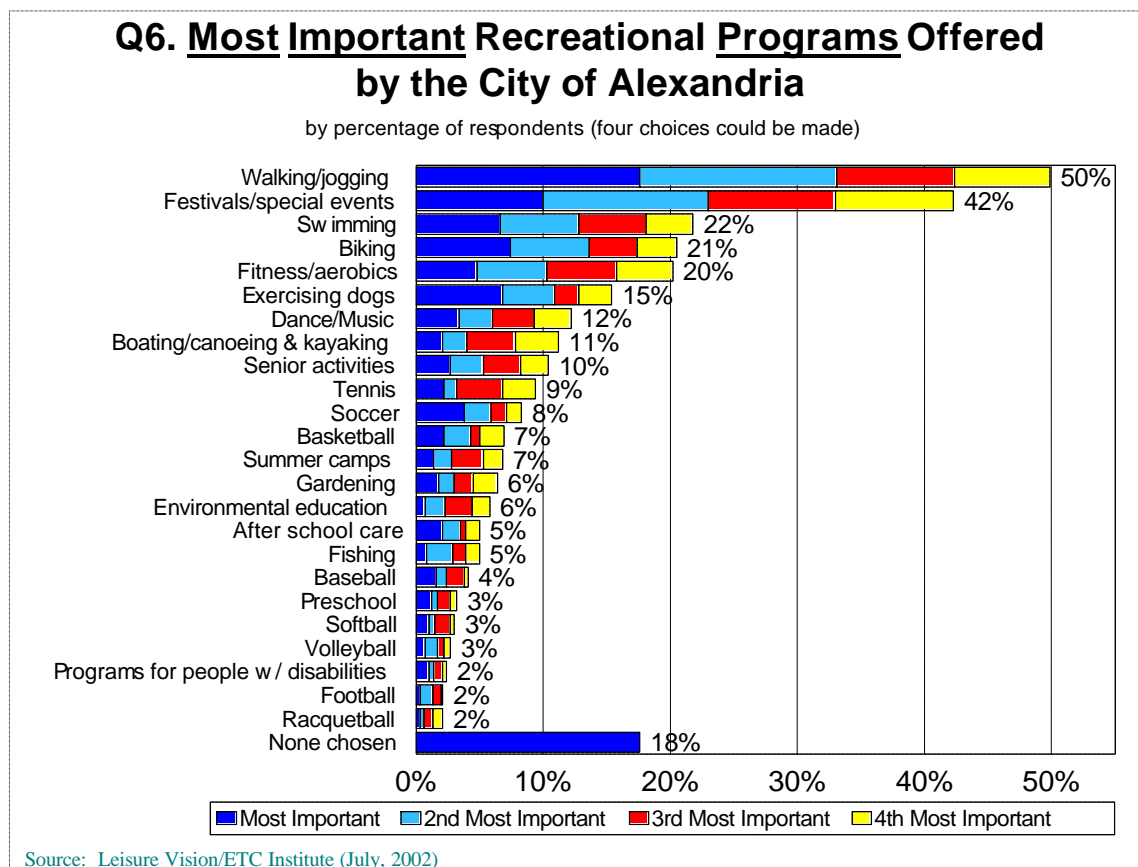
**Festivals/special events (48%)** was the program that the highest percentage of respondent households had participated in during the past two years. Other programs that a high percentage of respondent households had participated in during the past two years include: walking/jogging (44%); swimming (22%); biking (19%); exercising dogs (17%); and fitness/aerobics (16%).



### Most Important Recreational Programs

From the list of 24 various recreational programs offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, respondents were asked to indicate the four that are most important to them and their household. The following summarizes key findings:

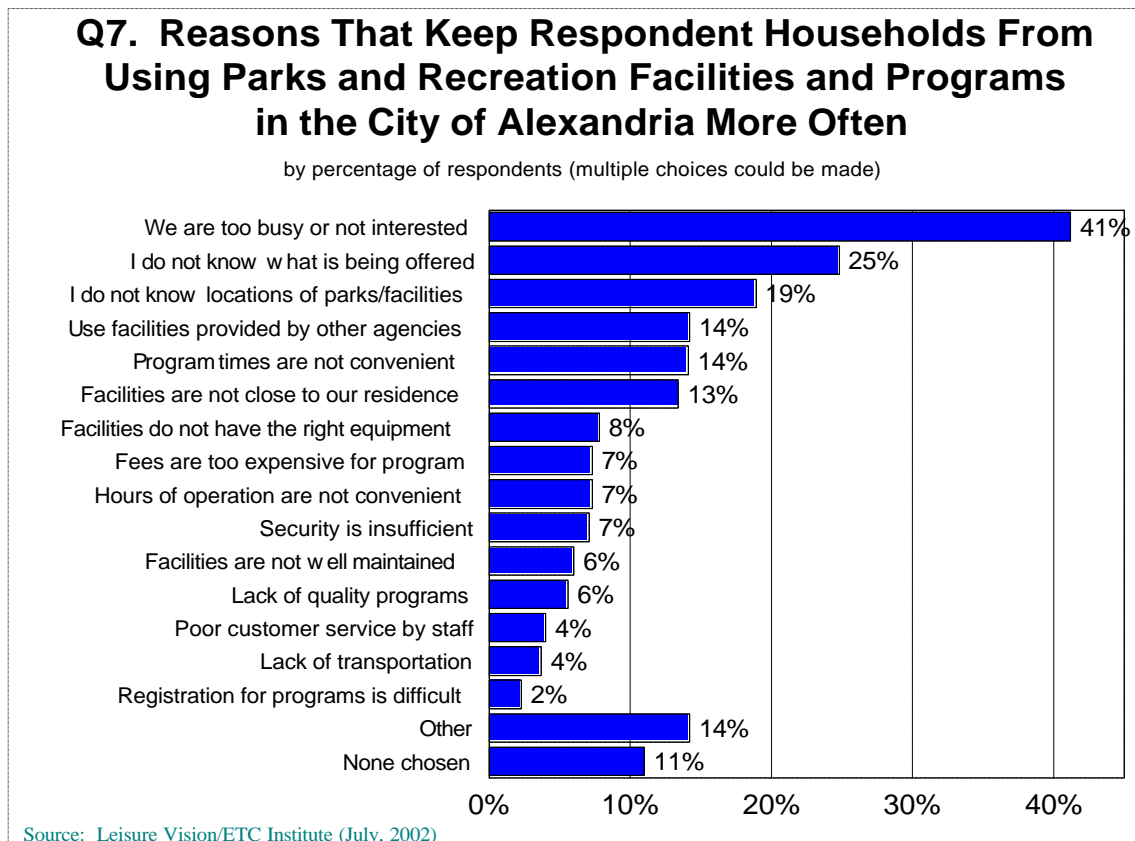
**Walking/jogging (50%)** had the highest percentage of respondent households rate it as **one of their top four most important programs**. There are three other programs that had at least 20% of respondent households rate it as one of their top four, including: festivals/special events (42%); swimming (22%); biking (21%); and fitness/aerobics (20%). It should also be noted that walking/jogging received by a wide margin the most first choices as the most important program.



### ***Reasons For Not Using Parks, Facilities and Programs More Often***

From a list of 15 options, respondents were asked to indicate all of the reasons that keep them or members of their household from using parks and recreational facilities and programs in the City of Alexandria more often. The following summarizes key findings:

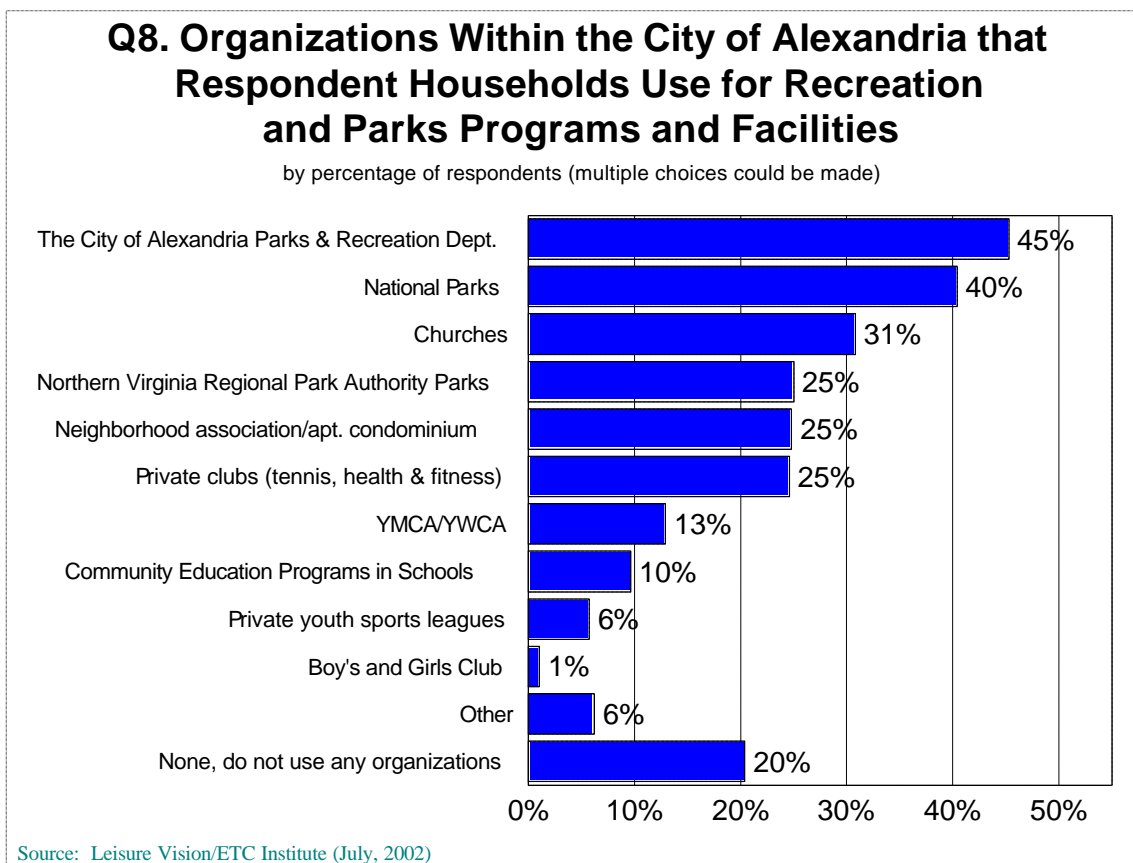
**The most common reason that kept respondent households from using parks and recreational facilities and programs more often was “we are too busy or not interested” (41%).** Other reasons that kept a high percentage of respondent households from using parks and recreational facilities and programs more often included: “I do not know what is being offered” (25%); and “I do not know locations of parks/facilities” (19%). It should also be noted that only 4% indicated “poor customer service by staff” as a reason they don’t use parks and recreational facilities and programs more often, and only 6% indicated “lack of quality programs.”



### Organizations Used for Recreation and Parks Programs and Facilities

From a list of 10 organizations within the City of Alexandria, respondent households were asked to indicate all of the ones they use for recreation and parks programs and facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

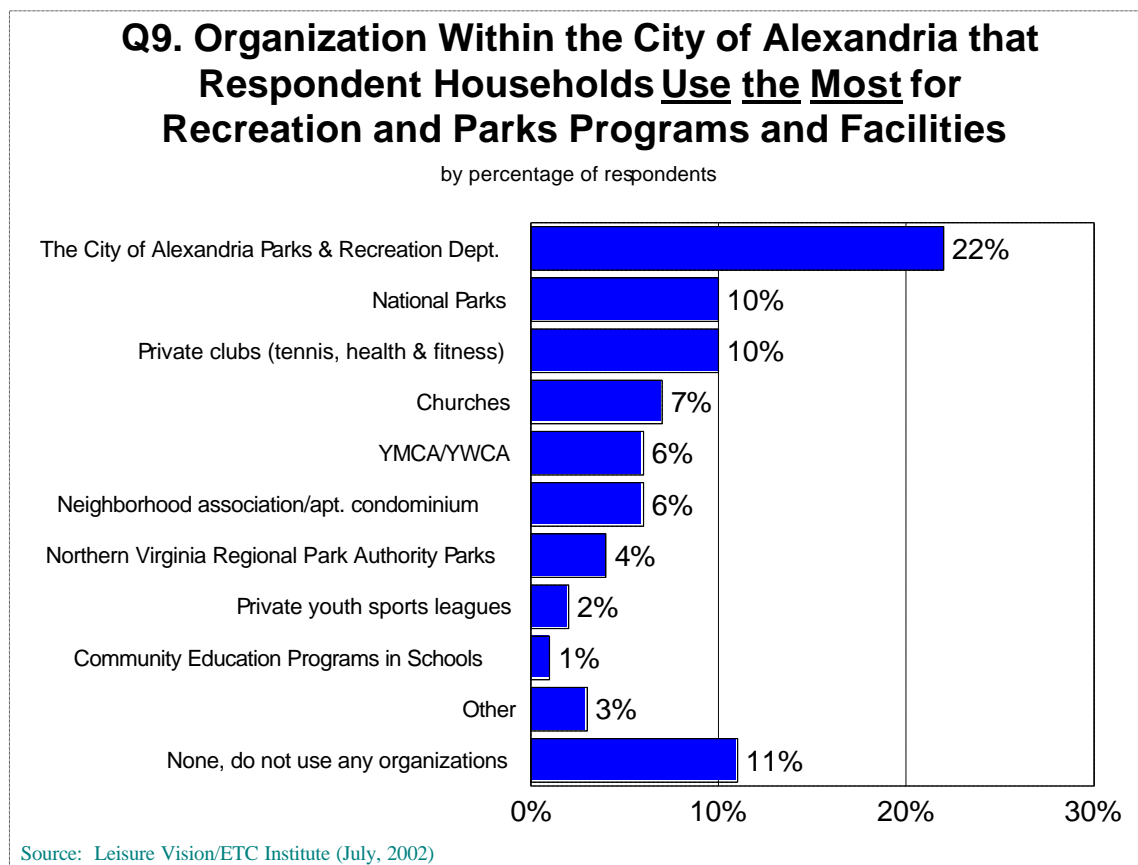
**The City of Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department (45%) is the organization used by the highest percentage of respondent households.** There are five other organizations that at least one-fourth of respondent households use, including: National Parks (40%); churches (31%); Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Parks (25%); neighborhood association/apt. condominium (25%); and private clubs (25%).



### Organizations Whose Programs and Facilities Respondents Use the Most

From the list of 10 organizations within the City of Alexandria, respondent households were asked to indicate which one they use the most for recreation and parks programs and facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

**The City of Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department (22%) is the organization that the highest percentage of respondent households indicated as the one they use the most.** There are two other organizations that at least 10% of respondent households indicated as the one they use the most. They are National Parks (10%) and private clubs (10%).



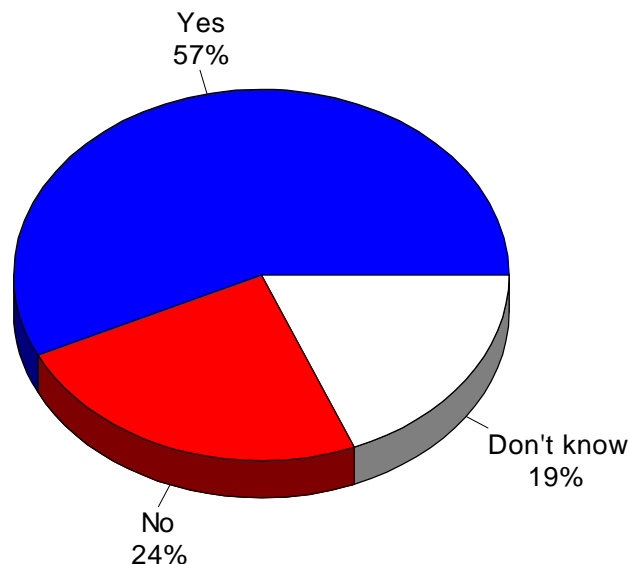
### ***Satisfaction with the Number of Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities***

Respondents were asked if they thought there were enough parks, trails, and recreational facilities near their household. The following summarizes key findings:

**Over half (57%) of respondents indicated that there are enough parks, trails, and recreational facilities near their home.** Twenty-four percent (24%) indicated there are not enough parks, trails, and recreational facilities, and the remaining 19% indicated “don’t know”.

#### **Q10. Are There Enough Parks, Trails & Recreation Facilities Near Respondent Households?**

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

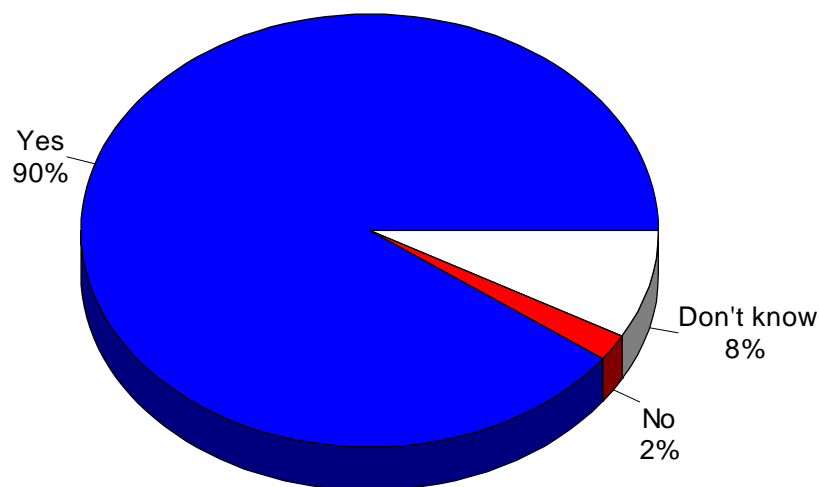
### ***Well Maintained Park's Enhancement on the Property Value of Homes***

Respondents were asked if they thought that well maintained parks enhance the property value of surrounding homes. The following summarizes key findings:

**Nearly all (90%) respondents indicated that well maintained parks do enhance the property value of surrounding homes. Only 2% indicated they do not enhance property value, and the remaining 8% indicated "don't know".**

#### **Q11. Do Well Maintained Parks Enhance the Property Value of Surrounding Homes?**

by percentage of respondents

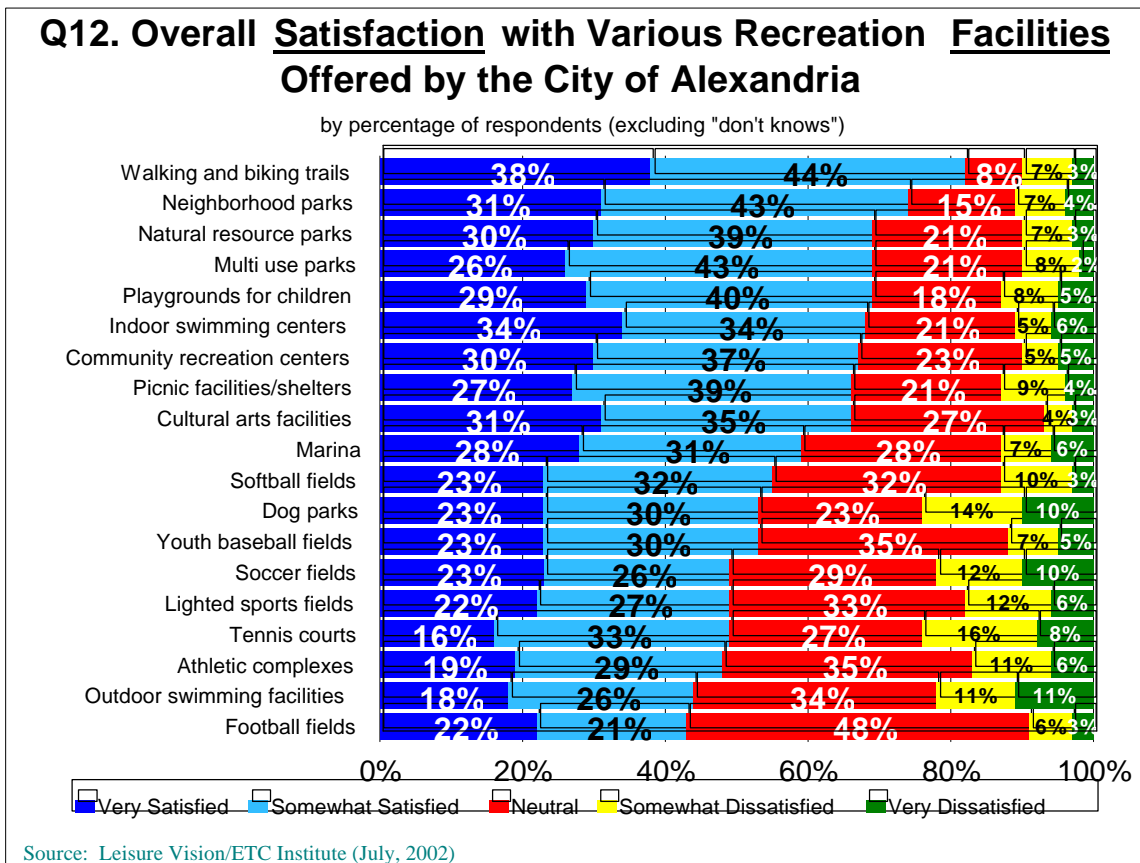


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July 2002)

## Satisfaction with Various Recreational Facilities

Based on a list of 19 various recreational facilities offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each one. The following summarizes key findings:

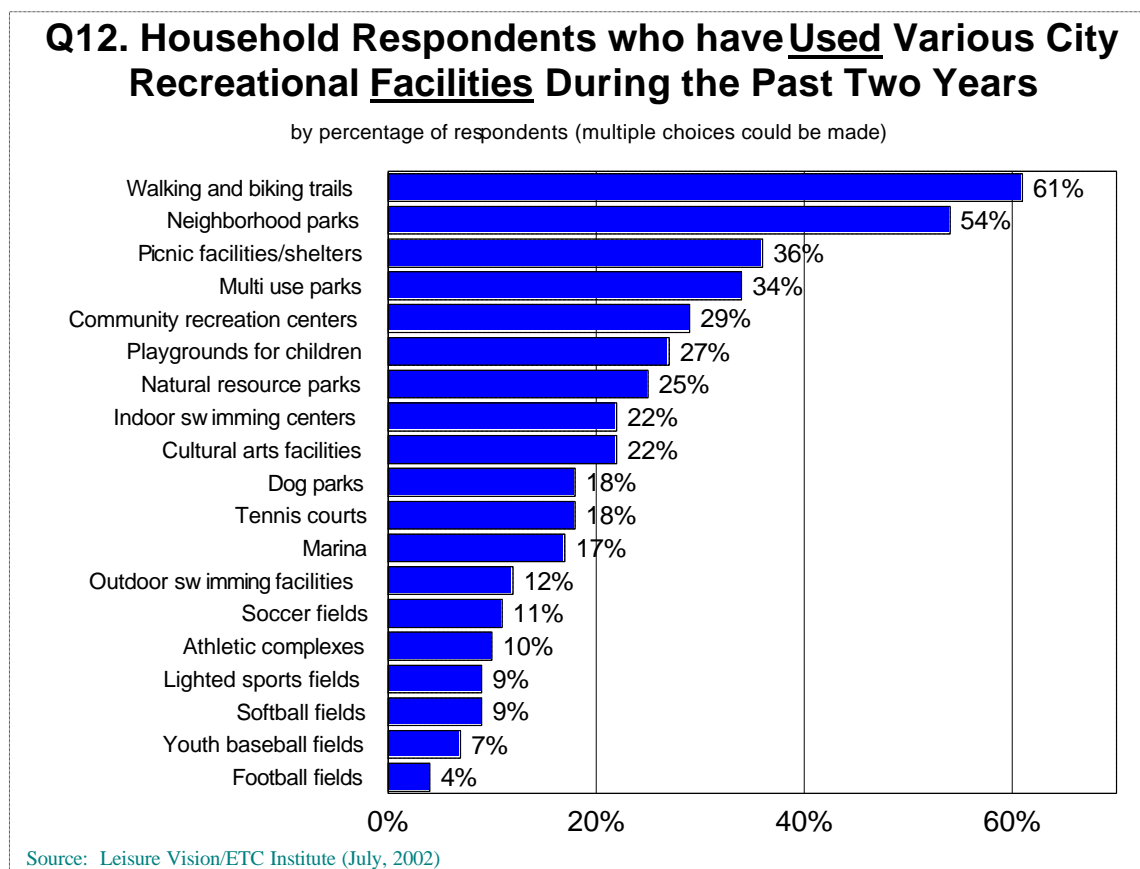
**Walking and biking trails is the facility that had the highest percentage of respondents indicate they are either very satisfied (38%) or somewhat satisfied (44%) with it.** There are six other facilities that over two-thirds of respondents were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with. They are: neighborhood parks (74%); natural resource parks (69%); multi use parks (69%); playgrounds for children (69%); indoor swimming centers (68%); and community recreation centers (67%).



## Usage of Various Recreational Facilities

From the list of 19 various recreational facilities offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, respondent were asked to indicate which ones they or members of their household had used during the past two years. The following summarizes key findings:

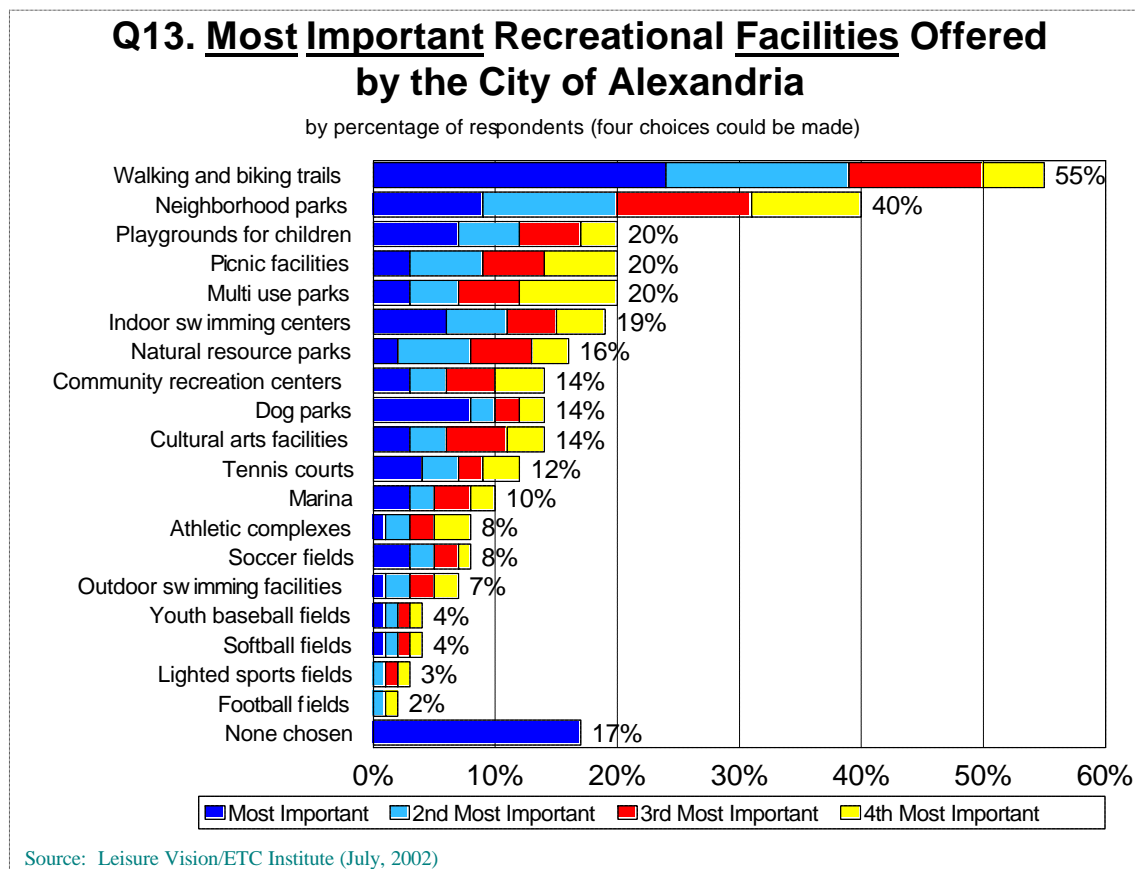
**Walking and biking trails (61%) is the facility that the highest percentage of respondent households had used during the past two years.** There are three other facilities that over one-third of respondent households had used during the past two years. They are: neighborhood parks (54%); picnic facilities/shelters (36%); and multi use parks (34%).



## Most Important Recreational Facilities

From the list of 19 various recreational facilities offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, respondents were asked to indicate the four that are most important to them and their household. The following summarizes key findings:

**Walking and biking trails (55%) had the highest percentage of respondent households rate it as one of their top four most important facilities.** There are four other facilities that at least 20% of respondent households rated as one of their top four, including: neighborhood parks (40%); playgrounds for children (20%); picnic facilities (20%); and multi use parks (20%). It should also be noted that walking and biking trails received by a wide margin the most first choices as the most important facility.



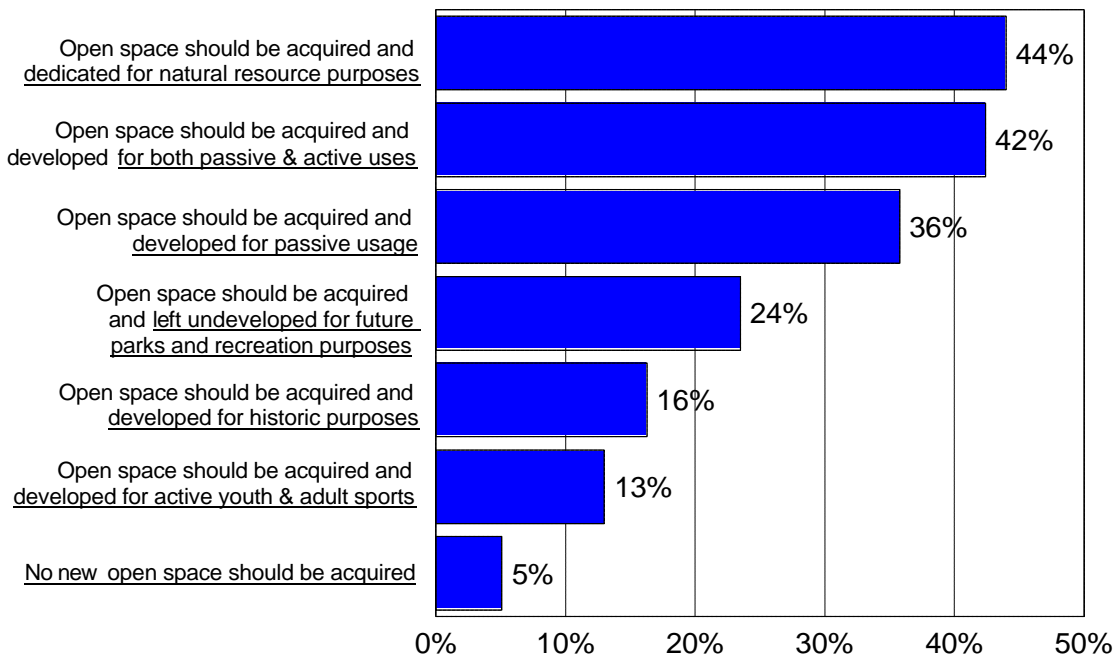
## Various Options for Acquiring and Developing Open Space

Based on a list of 7 various options regarding acquiring and developing open space for parks and recreation purposes, respondents were asked which two options they and members of their household would support the most. The following summarizes key findings:

**Nearly half (44%) of respondents indicated that open space should be acquired and dedicated for natural resource purposes.** Other open space options that a high percentage of respondent households indicated as one of the two they would most support include: open space should be acquired and developed for both passive and active uses (42%); and open space should be acquired and developed for passive usage (36%).

### Q14. Open Space Options for Parks and Recreation Purposes that Respondent Households Support Most

by percentage of respondents (two choices could be made)

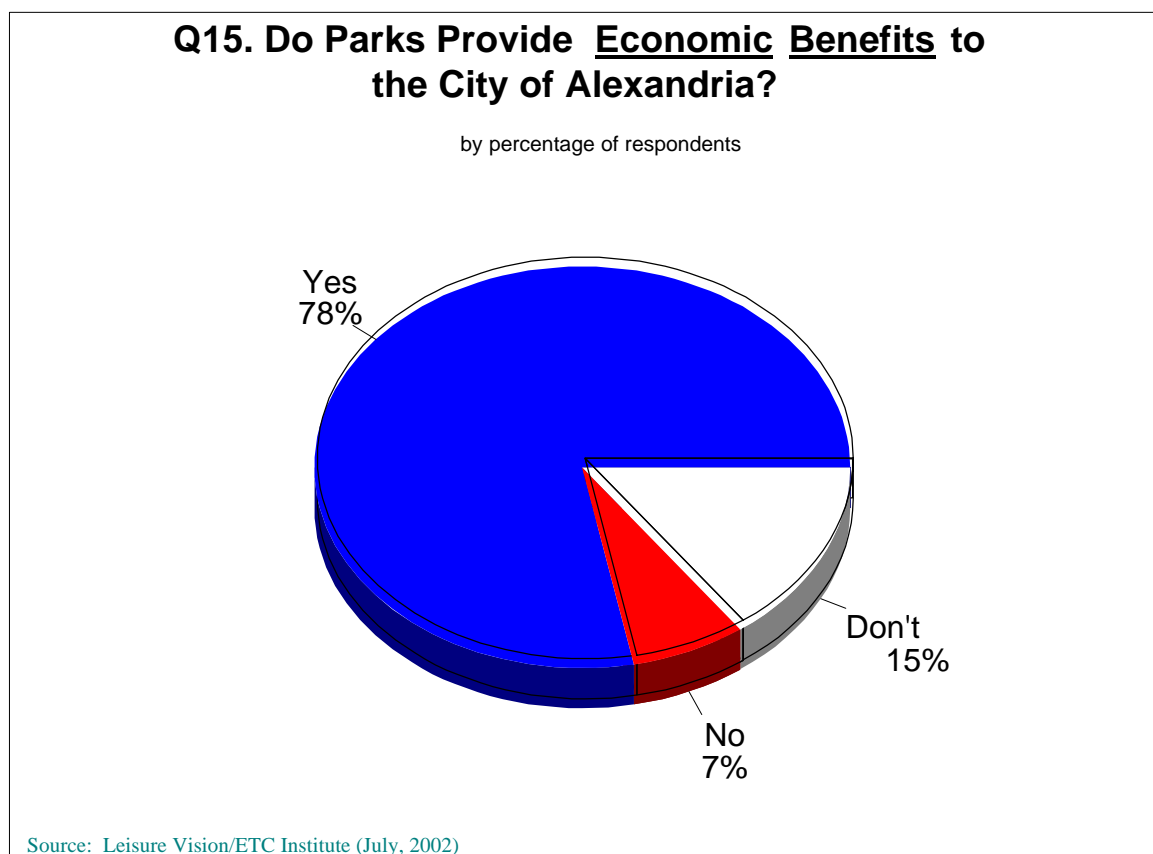


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

## ***Do Parks Provide Economic Benefits to the City of Alexandria***

Respondents were asked if they thought that parks provide economic benefits to the City of Alexandria. The following summarizes key findings:

**Over three-fourths (78%) of respondents indicated that parks do provide economic benefit to the City of Alexandria.** Only 7% indicated that parks do not provide economic benefit, and the remaining 15% indicated “don’t know”.



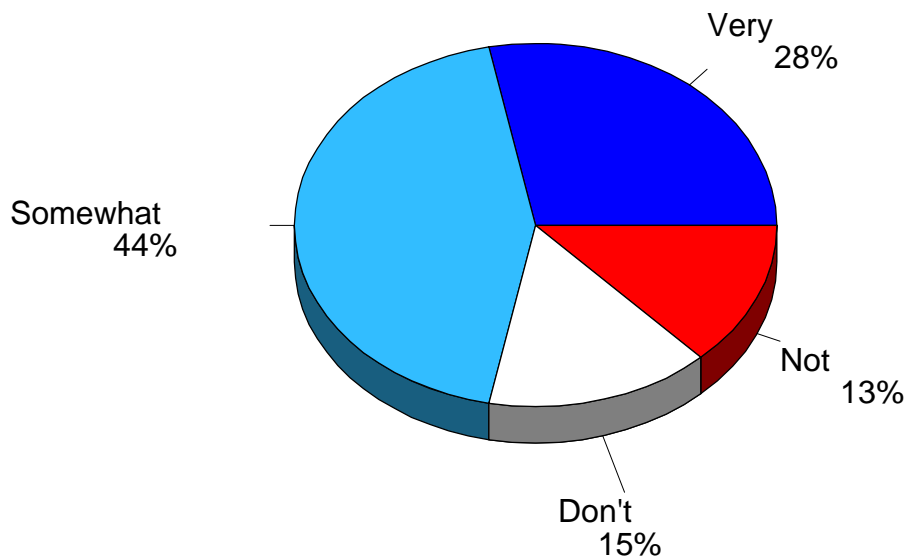
### ***Support for Users of Recreation Programs Paying User Fees***

Respondents were asked how supportive they would be of having users of recreation programs and special events pay user fees to help support the costs to offer and operate these programs and events. The following summarizes key findings:

**Nearly three-fourths of respondents were either very supportive (28%) or somewhat supportive (44%) of having users of recreation programs and special events pay user fees. Thirteen percent (13%) were not supportive, and the remaining 15% indicated “don’t know”.**

#### **Q16. Support for Having Users of Recreation Programs and Special Events Pay User Fees to Help Support the Costs to Offer and Operate these Programs**

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

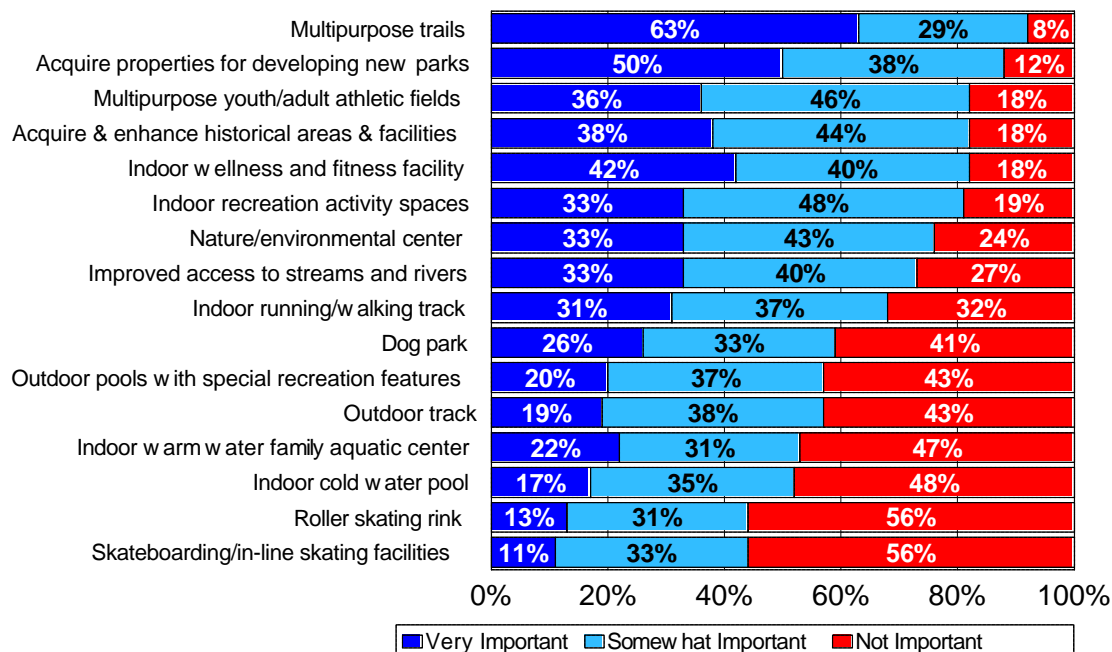
## Importance of Developing Various New Parks and Recreational Facilities

Based on a list of 16 various new parks and recreational facilities that the City of Alexandria could develop and maintain, respondents were asked to rate the importance of each one. The following summarizes key findings:

Multipurpose trails had the highest percentage of respondents rate it as either very important (63%) or somewhat important (29%) to develop and maintain. There are five other new parks and facilities that over 80% of respondents indicated as being either very important or somewhat important to develop and maintain. They are: acquire properties for developing new parks (88%); multipurpose youth/adult athletic fields (82%); acquire and enhance historical areas and facilities (82%); indoor wellness and fitness facility (82%); and indoor recreation activity space (81%).

### Q17. Importance of Developing and Maintaining Various New Parks & Recreation Facilities for City of Alexandria Citizens

by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't knows")



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

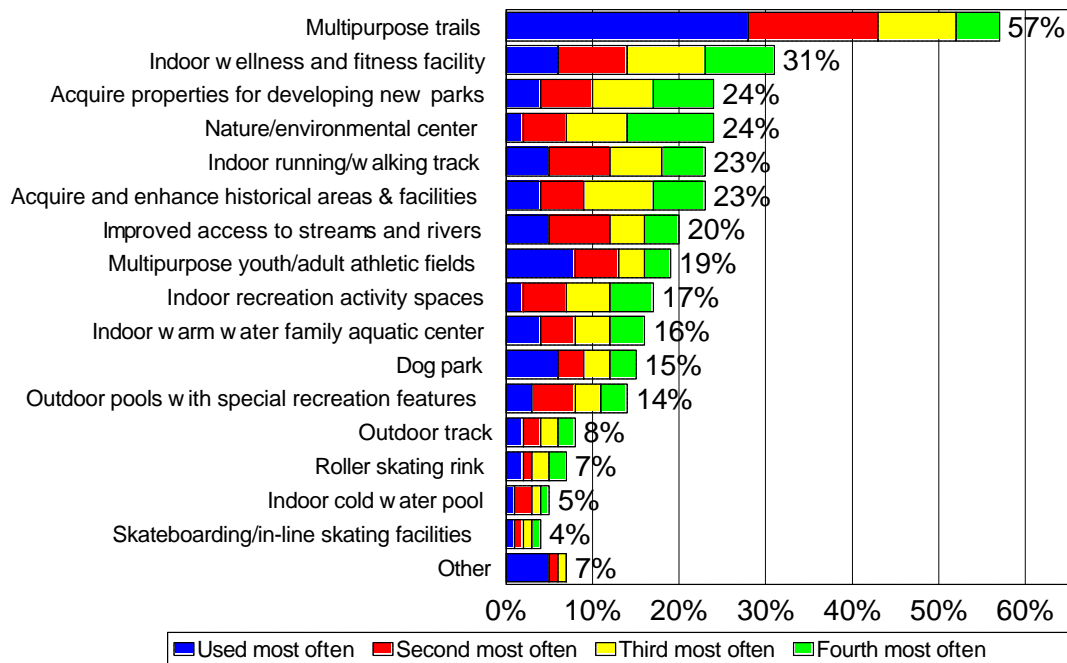
### New Parks and Facilities Respondents Would Use Most

Based on the list of 16 various new parks and recreation facilities that the City of Alexandria could develop and maintain, respondents were asked to indicate which four they and members of their household would use most. The following summarizes key findings:

**Multipurpose trails (57%)** had by a wide margin the highest percentage of respondents indicate it as one of the four new parks/facilities that they and members of their household would use most. Other parks/facilities that a high percentage of respondent households indicated they would use most include: indoor wellness and fitness facility (31%); acquire properties for developing new parks (24%); nature/environmental center (24%); indoor running/walking track (23%); and acquire and enhance historical areas and facilities (23%). It should also be noted that multipurpose trails received by a wide margin the most first choices as the park/facility that respondent households would use most.

### Q18. The New Parks & Recreation Facilities that Respondent Households Would Use Most if they were Built

by percentage of respondents (four choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

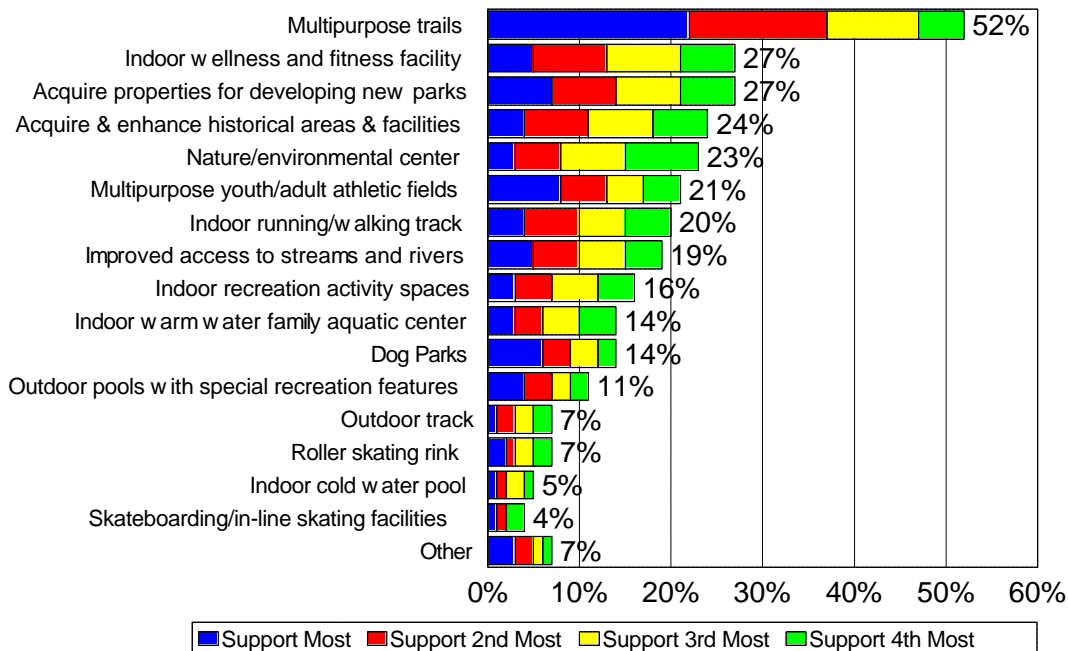
## New Parks and Facilities Most Willing to Support with Tax Dollars

Based on the list of 16 various new parks and recreation facilities that the City of Alexandria could develop and maintain, respondents were asked to indicate which four they would be most willing to support with their tax dollars. The following summarizes key findings:

**Multipurpose trails (52%)** had by a wide margin the highest percentage of respondents indicate it as one of the four new parks/facilities they would be most willing to support with their tax dollars. Other parks/facilities that a high percentage of respondents indicated they would support with tax dollars include: indoor wellness and fitness facility (27%); acquire properties for developing new parks (27%); acquire and enhance historical areas and facilities (24%); and nature/environmental center (23%). It should also be noted that multipurpose trails received by a wide margin the most first choices as the park/facility that respondents would be most willing to support with their tax dollars.

### Q19. The New Parks & Recreation Facilities that Respondent Households Would Support Most with their Tax Dollars

by percentage of respondents (four choices could be made)

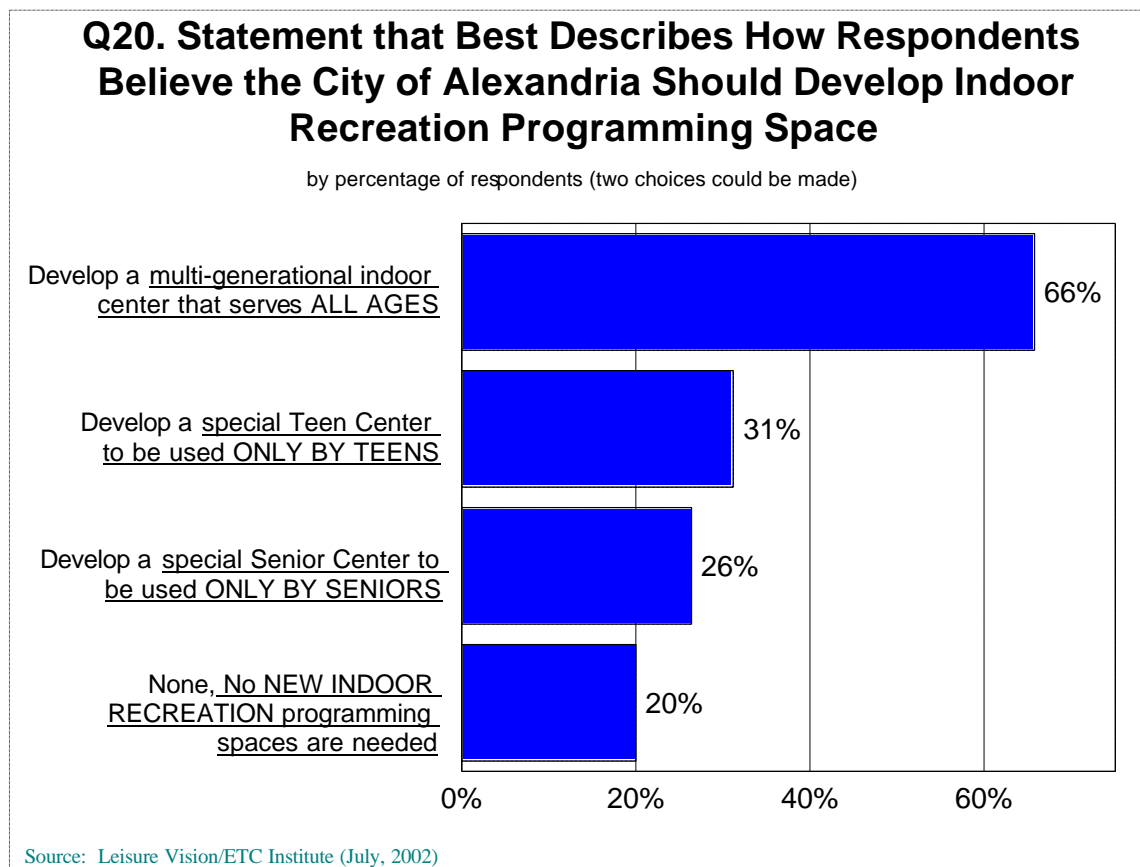


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

## ***Best Ways to Develop Indoor Recreation Programming Space***

Based on a list of 4 options, respondents were asked which two they thought best described the way the City of Alexandria should develop indoor recreation programming space to serve youth, teens, families, seniors, and individuals. The following summarizes key findings:

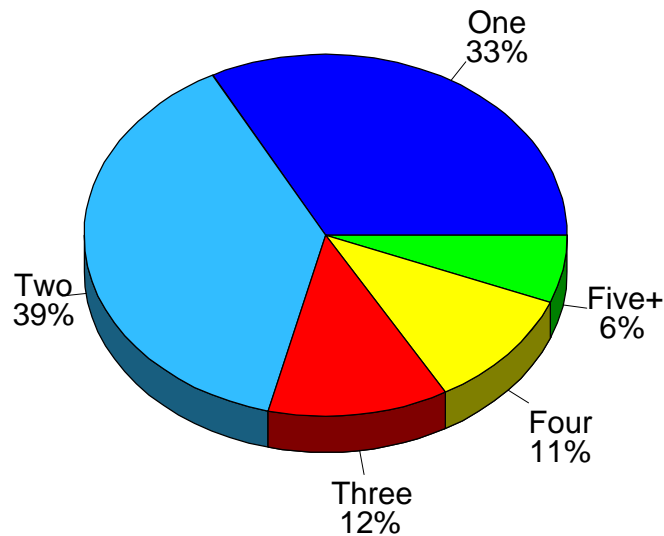
Two-thirds (66%) of respondents indicated that the City of Alexandria should develop a multi-generational indoor center that serves all ages. Thirty-one percent (31%) indicated that the City should develop a special Teen Center to be used only by teens, and 26% indicated that the City should develop a special Senior Center to be used only by seniors. Twenty percent (20%) indicated that no new indoor recreation programming spaces are needed in the City of Alexandria.



## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

### **Q1. Demographics: Number of People in Household**

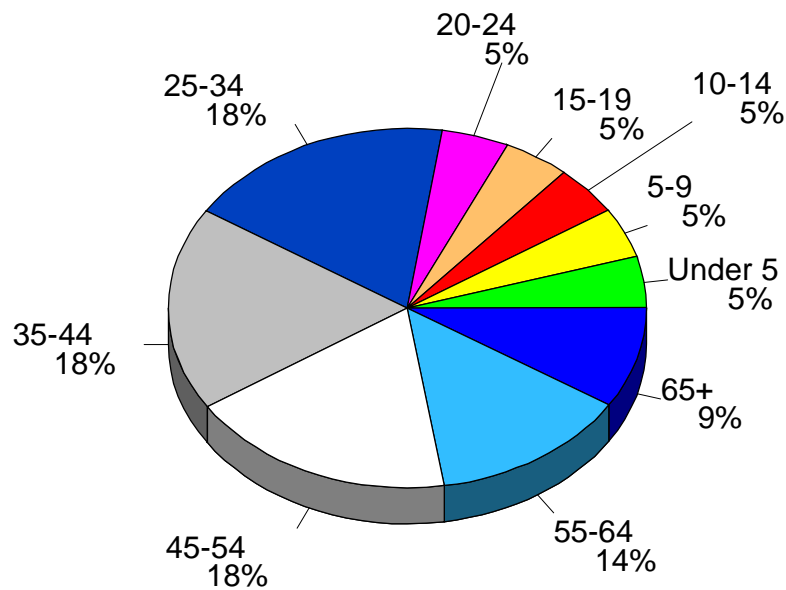
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

### **Q2. Demographics: Ages of People in Household**

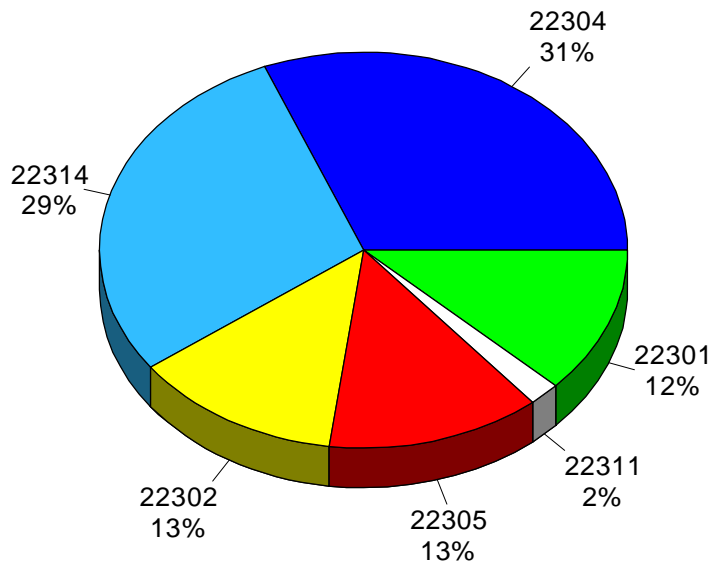
by percentage of household occupants



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

### Q21. Demographics: Zip Code

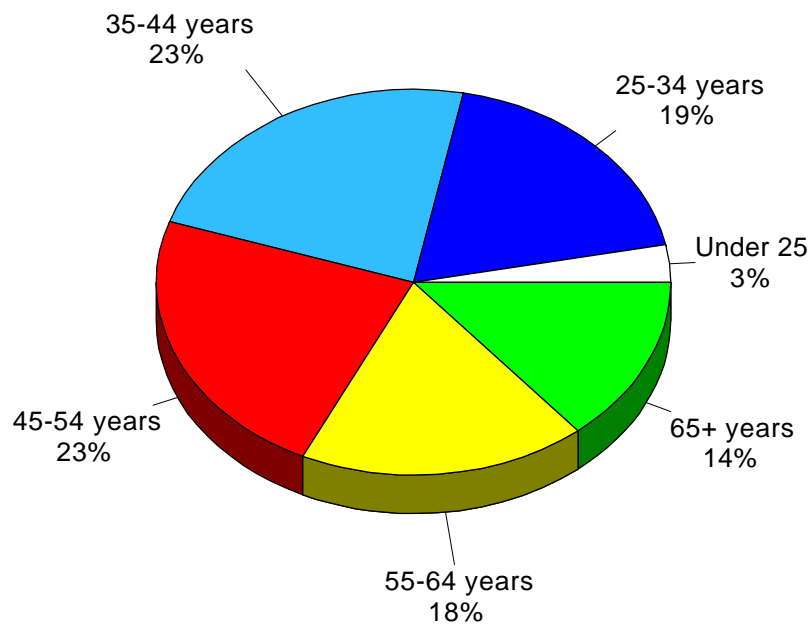
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

### Q23. Demographics: Age

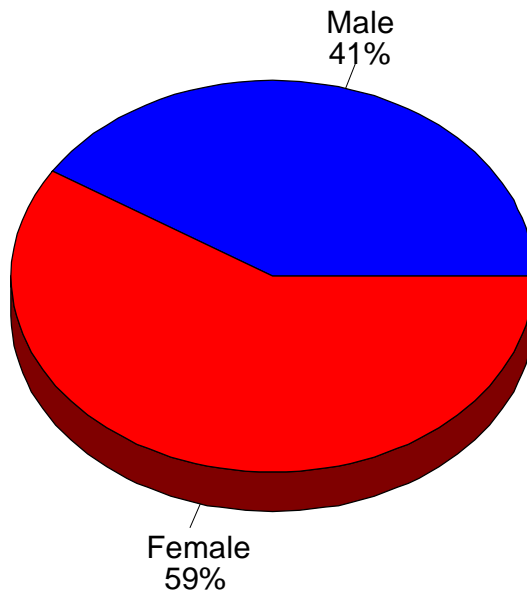
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

### Q24. Demographics: Gender

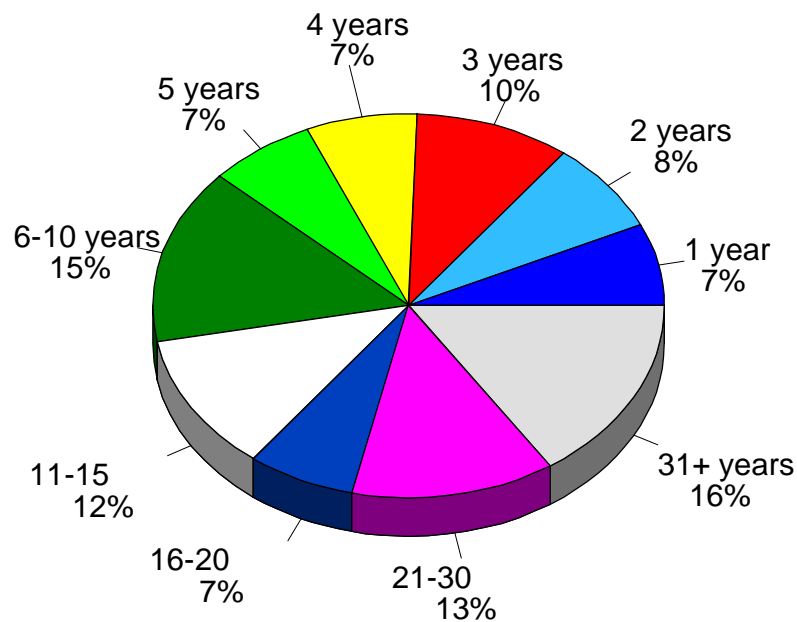
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

### Q25. Demographics: Years Lived in Alexandria

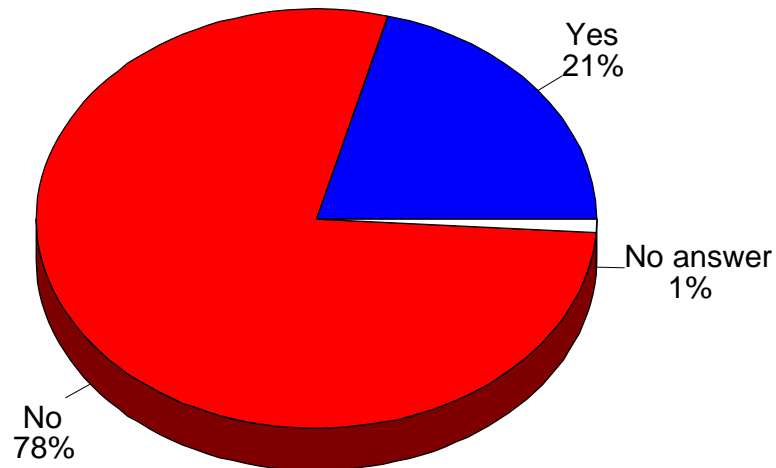
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

**Q26. Demographics: Do Respondents have a Dog in their Household**

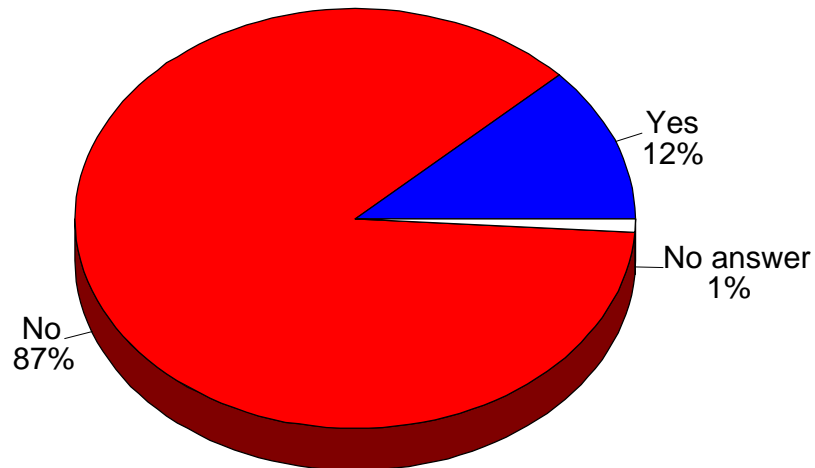
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

**Q27. Demographics: Are Members of Household of Hispanic, Latino, or other Spanish Ancestry**

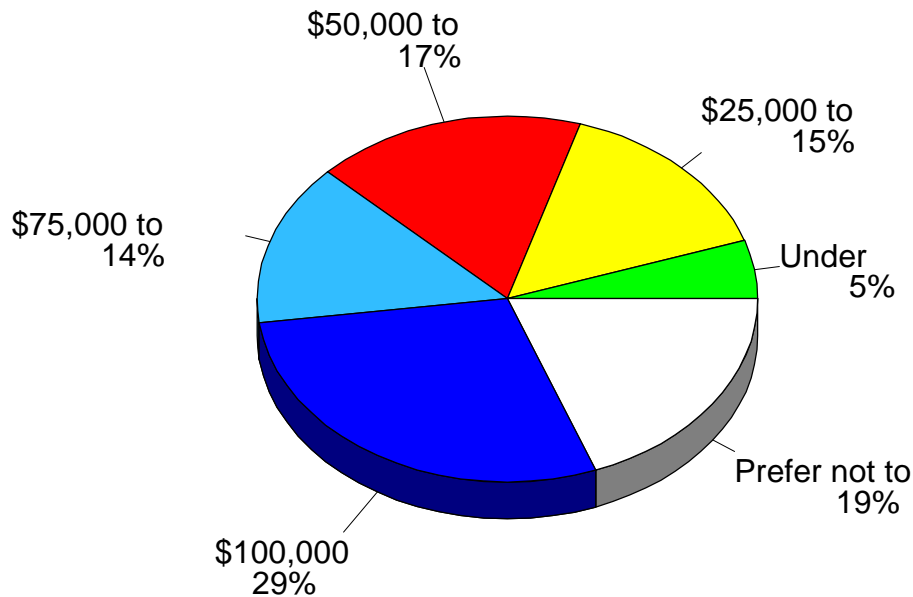
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

### Q28. Demographics: Total Annual Household Income

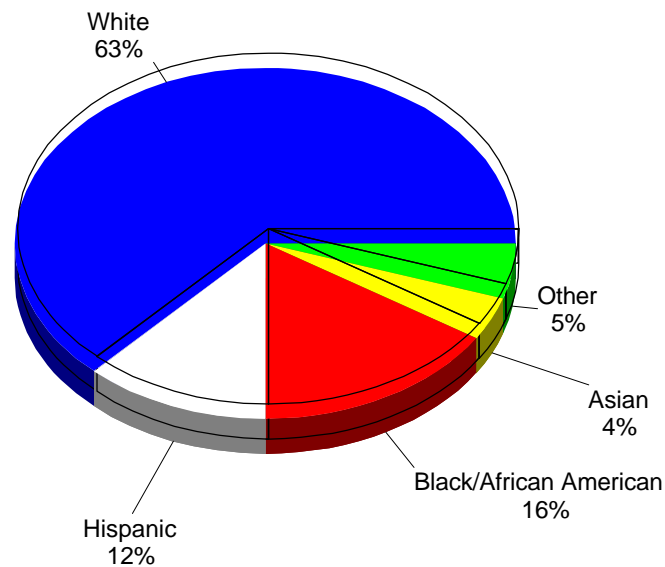
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

### Q29. Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)